

Major General Read or Lieutenant General Morris could talk to the commandant at Belvoir, or to the commanding general of TRADOC, or the Deputy Chief of Staff, Research, Development, and Acquisition.

So, I needed to stay for that year. Then General Morris in October or November called me and we talked about my future. He said at the end of that year he wanted to know what I'd like to do and we'd go from there. So, I told him I'd like to stay in the Washington area, and if they didn't have a brigadier position for the ACE, I'd like to be the Deputy Director of Civil Works.

### **Deputy Director of Civil Works**

Q: So, that's what happened? October '80?

A: That's when I became the Deputy Director of Civil Works, right. That conversation took place the year before, or over the intervening months.

Q: Why did you want to be the Deputy Director of Civil Works as your next assignment?

A: Well, I wanted to stay in Washington. I'd just been there a year. I thought, having had a year of experience on the ACE part of the Army Staff, that if I could take a year in the Directorate of Civil Works prior to being a division commander, it would be beneficial. Not having been a district engineer, I thought that position would help me lean into division commander responsibilities. Understanding things from the headquarters, I'd be more capable when I went out to a division.

Q: So, the division command would inevitably happen regardless, probably, whether you—

A: Probably.

Q: Okay, that was actually in the fall, then, of 1980 that you went over to Civil Works.

A: My reporting date was delayed. General Norm Delbridge was coming in to be the ACE and I stayed on as the acting ACE for a short time. I don't know if it was a month or six weeks between General Read and General Delbridge, but there was some interim period because General Read had to get on to the Lower Mississippi Valley Division, and General Delbridge could not yet leave South Pacific Division. So, I stayed on as acting ACE.

Q: So, at the time you went over to Civil Works, General Heiberg was the director, is that right?

A: That's right. He had come back earlier from USAREUR, had been pulled back to be the Director of Civil Works in summer '79. He'd been the director for a year. We had talked, and so I was going back to be his deputy again. One day before I reported to Civil Works, the

Deputy Chief, General Johnson, said, “General Morris has told you you’re going to the Ohio River Division, now, hasn’t he?” I said, “No.” He said, “Oh, well, maybe he better tell you. I’ll let him talk to you on Monday.” So, on Monday General Morris called and said, “Yeah, you’re going to the Ohio River Division. I mean, Harry Griffith’s leaving, and you get to be the new commander out there, you’re up.”

Now we were into the fall, other things had happened, and that was really kind of an unwanted surprise. Much as I wanted to go to command a division, the timing with respect to my family was poor. My son John was into his senior year in high school. Then I hadn’t had the opportunity to get into civil works to do the headquarters aspect too. So, anyway, I went over to Civil Works for a relatively short period, four months, and then went on to the Ohio River Division in January ’81.

Q: Did you leave your family, then, in Washington, until—

A: I left them here until the summer of ’81 and then moved them to Cincinnati. I commuted back whenever I could to see them, which is often when you’re in the middle of testimony time and getting to meet your congressmen and that sort of thing. Division engineers come to Washington often enough, but especially during the first months you can find yourself back here quite often.

Q: In your short stay in Civil Works, what things would you recall as being the hot issues at that time?

A: To put the perspective on the time, the fall of ’80 was the end of the Carter administration, to include the election, so the first couple of my months there were filled with things pertaining to programs that the Carter administration wanted to put forth as initiatives. Private hydropower development of public dams was a big issue. Certain federal dams were to be made available for private interests to develop the hydropower potential. That had really come to a focal point, and the Carter administration was portraying this as an initiative for returning things to the private sector. It had a lot of visibility.

There were other things, such as trying to open up the U.S. ports to facilitate coal sales to the Japanese and other folks. I found myself at the White House three or four times at these things that oftentimes became “events.” The administration was calling folks in for a high-visibility presentation and event.

Q: Another thing that happened in December was the so-called “Stockman Manifesto” by President-elect Reagan’s soon-to-be budget director. There were some memos in the Civil Works files from December 1980 from Programming Division related to what they saw as the coming problems with the new administration’s plans in cuts, for example. Do you recall getting into that?

A: No, what I recall is that we were very interested in hooking up with a transition team for the new Reagan administration and eager to learn who would be our new assistant secretary. Mike Blumenfeld was assistant secretary in the Carter administration. He and General

Heiberg had a very good working relationship, and I think we all respected him as an individual and how he ran the office. My own personal experiences were with Victor Veysey. He was the first Assistant Secretary for Civil Works, when I was in Public Affairs, and it was a rather vitriolic kind of early start that I witnessed then.

Like everyone is in any transition when you're with a federal agency, we were looking forward with some anxiety as to what it is we're going to have to do. We're going to have to bring aboard and educate that person as to who we are and what we are. There was some feeling that we might have to fight all the old battles all over again because anybody who wants to make a cut would look around and certain things seem to be obvious things to cut whether they've been disproven over and over again or not. Also, there was the Corps' positive can-do attitude. We wanted to get on with getting our guy, the Assistant Secretary for Civil Works, and making sure he had the opportunity to know us and understand us so that he would be our best representative.

So, with all of that, we were really looking forward to the new administration. The Reagan transition folks were well advised in all the papers as to what was going on—only we couldn't find ours. No one seemed to be interested in these early days about the Army Corps of Engineers and what was going on. We kept waiting for the phone to ring, for somebody to come get briefed about us and what we were doing because we wanted to get in early and we had a lot of staff work done and we had everybody prepared—Bory Steinberg and others—all ready to make the necessary contacts. Nobody called for the longest time.

Now, you have to remember that my last duty day was in December because I reported to work in the Ohio River Division in January. The time between the first week in November and the end of December is about seven weeks long, so there's only a short period in there. What might have been happening with transition teams toward the end of December and January might have missed me.

The other major things that were happening during my period in Civil Works were the National Waterways Study and the National Hydropower Study. Even in the short four months' time I was there, I got very involved in them, to include going out on the road with the Institute of Water Resources folks and being a front person for public meetings in various parts of the country on the hydropower study and the waterways study. We would take testimony and listen to the talk, give talks, that sort of thing.

To get back to what started all this, I don't remember a Stockman Manifesto stated in those kinds of terms.

Q: Okay. That might have been late in December, I think.

A: If it was dated December, at that point, that's about when we were starting to have some contacts and maybe looking to see something happening.

Q: Well, you were only in that Deputy Director of Civil Works job a short time, but do you have any comments or feelings about how it was to be Deputy ACE and how it was to be Deputy Director of Civil Works? Similar? Two very different jobs?

A: Some of both, I guess. Anytime you're deputy, of course, you're number two, and number one calls the shots. So, you fall in with the style of the principal and you're taking on those things the principal wants you to take on. It was rather specific the way General Read divided things up. That is, he took the congressional side and dealt with the Army senior leadership; I took the Programming Budget Committee "put it all together" side.

Then you have to be able to cover in the absence of the principal. That's not always the easiest thing to do when you have to step in because number one is very comfortable where he is, knowing what he knows. Then he steps out for a couple of days or a week and number two steps in knowing the basic business but maybe not knowing all the nuances that the principal was dealing in. So, there's always a little bit of anxiety, "Do I know everything I need to know to carry it like he would have wanted it carried?" Not just the rudimentary stuff, but to play the nuances. So, in the ACE's shop I was very much involved in the processes, ongoing, intense kind of processes.

The Civil Works shop was quite different. First of all, I'd been General Heiberg's deputy once before so I knew him and he knew me. It was a brand-new arena. That is, I went to the ACE's shop right out of Europe, where I was dealing with the same things, so I mean I really had a feel for the issues. The environment was different only in that it was the Army Staff environment. When I went into Civil Works, many of the people I knew from my days in Public Affairs—Bory Steinberg, Alex Shwaiko—I knew them from that time frame, but now the issues were different and I would be dealing on a higher level. Tenn-Tom was a big issue, you know, with lots of articles in the newspapers, environmental programs, hydropower, private development. I mean, here were macro issues and I was coming in at the highest level of policy formulation and yet I had not been down at the bottom coming up like I had just moved from Europe to the ACE.

You know, it was working with people, the familiarity was there, the easy kind of way General Heiberg has, his daily sunrise service meeting. George Robertson had been the Executive Director in Civil Works. Once I was announced to go to the Ohio River Division, General Heiberg made George a deputy as well, so he was working with two deputies. We'd have a sunrise service, as he called it, every morning at 7:30. We would sit around and talk about things for the day for 20 to 25 minutes, then we'd all go off on our separate ways.

In the ACE, the Army Staff was intense and you knew you were going to come in and be engaged in combat all day long on issues. In Civil Works, since I was new and learning and getting involved, I had time to advance my learning, but yet I might get a flash assignment with little warning.

For instance, one day I participated with the then Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors and a whole bunch of folks at the White House. The Carter administration had invited all the hydropower people to come over and have a meeting at 10:00 that would be

followed by a reception and that afternoon with a big press conference in the East Room where various cabinet folks would talk about what the administration was doing in hydropower. It was at the sunrise service that morning, 7:30, that General Heiberg said, “I don’t think I’ll go to the White House meeting today. Why don’t you go for me?” I had about two hours to prepare to go to that meeting. So, I mean, there are challenges and then there are *challenges*. [Laughter]

So, I went over to the meeting chaired by, I believe, Alfred Kahn, Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors. He really was a sharp individual, good wit, obviously a top-flight guy in command of the situation. He had a command presence as he ran the meeting, was really in charge, could put himself down, had a sense of humor and everything else. I remember at this meeting I didn’t make the table—I was sitting in a row of chairs on the wall. After Alfred Kahn had given a short briefing, the first question came up. Now, the administration had identified something like 94 to 96 federal dams, almost all in the Corps of Engineers, which could be made available for private development. We had a bigger list, up to maybe a thousand, with various stages of difficulty. The 95 were the ones that could be done without too much problem, and we were not hot on allowing development of the rest of them. There’s a lot of practical problems when you do this.

The question was, “Well, Mr. Chairman, tell me, is this going to be the only list? Are there going to be more of these made available? What I really want to know is, is this just a Carter administration ploy for the upcoming election, or do you really mean it and is this going to be an ongoing program?”

That was the hot question. So, Chairman Kahn said, “No, of course not, we really mean to make this an ongoing program. General (pointing to me), I want you to tell him about what’s coming next.” [Laughter]

Since I knew what the answer was—I had met briefly one of the executive people for this committee as we started and knew he had been the coordinating person—so I said, “Well, that’s correct, and so-and-so over there has the list of those also being considered, so why don’t you take it from there?” [Laughter]

Q: That’s an iffy time to be at the White House, isn’t it, right before an election.

A: Well, so we went down to the reception afterwards where we had cookies and sweetened iced tea. I was standing there when one of the staff came up and said, “Here’s a couple of Carter supporters from the White House, General. Why don’t you tell them what you’re doing for Texas?” I was happy to get back to the headquarters!